

# Women in North Cyprus

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Adoption of the **OSCE Action Plan** for the promotion of Gender Equality in 2004 and putting pressure on countries to take vigorous steps in their national jurisdictions to promote equality of rights and opportunities among women and men in all areas of public and private life, is not too simple in practical life.

1) Women are still core of the family by culture and by nature. With the 2004 OSCE Action Plan, for the gender equality the position of the women is targeted to have work and life balance & enjoy full partnership in the political and economical life. This promotion of gender equality is definitely an issue, in exchanging with the healthy family structure. This is why in order to eliminate this trade off, it is vital and it has to be strategically planned by government policies in order to have effective solution to the matter. For centuries women worked at home and served as unpaid labour to keep a happy and stable family. So we must answer the question "are families and societies ready to trade in already existing family structure for the women equality and participation of social economical and political life or is it possible to have both?" The trick here is to have BOTH. Women are representing half of the society. If we want an equal representation in the parliament, and in all areas of the social life, successful change in the representation of the women can only done by creating infrastructure to support a healthy family structure. Therefore women should not feel guilty and responsible. Women need to feel free and not obligated to her children, family structure and elderly members of the family in order to have clear mind and conscious to contribute to the policy making levels. Government policies and strategic planning should focus on that and this can done by building more child care facilities by providing night and day cares, by developing different rules and laws.

2) Women for centuries were assigned to certain role models such as being school teachers, nurses, bank clerks, or work for the family as unpaid labour. This kind of culture could only change by education that starts from childhood. This cannot be achieved overnight by changing laws. This should be a long term government policy in order to be successful.

3) To implement a project which will make an impact and create a change in the cultural perception, infrastructure, and social life and share the decision powers with women of the country needs a great commitment a big budget and good strategic planning. As I can understand this is an EU strategy but it needs to have commitment by the states as well.

4) If member states agree to support this change and create the necessary funds for the project further monitoring, reporting and facilitating the member states can help to have parallel change.

5) Since equal participation of women is to be ensured by member states and we know that women need a starting point quotas are needed for them to catch up with the already on going race.

## **Turkish Cypriot Women**

Turkish Cypriot women, like all the citizens of North Cyprus, are individually members of the EU. Even though the EU Acquis Communautaire is not applicable to the Northern Part of Cyprus we have the legal rights, human rights and need to demand everything that the EU citizens enjoy.

All kinds of Turkish Cypriot NGOs are suffering in raising their voices in the EU arenas. NGOs which are registered to "Cyprus Government" have all the representation rights and benefits of the EU Action Plan to institutionalize. Whereas Turkish Cypriot NGOs that are representing the needs, culture, social variety of North Cyprus are being isolated due to recognition problem of the Turkish Cypriots.

Turkish Cypriot women have a great potential to take part in this inevitable change of representation in the decision making mechanisms. Turkish Cypriot women are ready to set up an organization-wide network to ensure gender mainstreaming in order to meet the overall aims of the Action Plan.

Turkish Cypriot women believe that they have the same rights to take part in senior level in the OSCE positions even though they aren't represented by any participant states.

Turkish Cypriot women have the infrastructure and human power and tools to take full participation in this change.

Turkish Cypriot women's profile of educational and employment development is not any different than the developments of the European women. Turkish Cypriot women are equally under-represented in the parliament of the country.

Gender awareness and equal representation in the parliament and decision mechanisms are very important and key elements of change in this matter.

Funds are needed to launch governmental policies to promote gender equality. Most of all monitoring and reporting is essential to have feed back and create commitment to Turkish Cypriots. We already have EU offices in North Cyprus. EU also gave Turkish Cypriots 259 million Euros for the economical and social development. I know that some of this money is for the gender equality. Being a part of the EU as well as exchanging information, know-how and strategies are very important in creating the necessary change.